

THE PENNY BLACK PLATES

SYNOPSIS

HISTORY:

An earlier version of this exhibit has achieved the following.....

Orapex 2007 (Ottawa)	Grand, Gold medal.
Royal-2007-Royale (Toronto)	Gold medal.
Philatelic Show 2008 (Boxborough)	Gold medal.
Royale-2008-Royal (Quebec City)	Gold medal.

Since this time significant items have been added including the 1d black on a Mulready letter sheet and the two 1d black strips of four - see below.

KEY ITEMS:

- Plate 1b - 1d black strip of 4 on cover.
- Plate 4 - 1d black on Mulready letter sheet.
- Plate 7 - 1d black strip of 4.
- Plate 10 - Mint block of 20 reds. (This is probably unique)
- Plate 11 - 1d black on cover.

STRUCTURE:

Eleven plates were used to produce the stamps. The exhibit explores each of them in numerical order.

Plate 1 is of more than average interest because it developed wear fast and was completely repaired by re-entry shortly after its introduction. Prior to the repair it is known as plate 1a after as plate 1b. Later it was also printed in red. Later still, after the reds were being printed, further repairs were made. Effort is made in the exhibit to match plate positions from the various printings. Varieties are extensive and many are shown. Examples are shown on cover to demonstrate usage but there is no intent to explore the postal history of the period.

Plate 2 was also printed in both black and red and matched positions are shown. Many varieties are seen throughout this plate.

Plates 3 and 4 were not used to print the penny reds. Both plates are nevertheless explored thoroughly with many varieties and several covers shown.

Plate 5 was used also for printing the reds so matched positions are shown. Two repairs were made to this plate and examples from both are shown. Repaired states from all plates are quite scarce.

Plates 6 and 7 were used only for black printings. As usual many varieties are found and a great many of these are shown. Plate 6 was repaired twice and examples from both repairs are shown.

Plates 8 and 9 are somewhat similar to each other. Both were used for both black and red printings and matched examples on and off cover are shown. Plate 8 has a significant page showing several examples of repaired impressions.

Plate 10 is a scarcer plate in black. It was used for both black and red printings. The key plate 10 piece is the (probably unique) mint block of thirty reds showing a large portion of the marginal inscription. As usual matched positions, varieties and usages are shown.

Plate 11 blacks are really quite scarce. The exhibit manages to show five examples off-cover (three with matching reds) and one on cover. One reason for this scarcity is that plate 11 was never intended to print blacks and was used for this purpose for a couple of days only when the post office found themselves running out of blacks before they were ready to issue the reds.